

Allegiance to God! 2 (Slide 1)

Last week we spoke a great deal about symbolic language that we often use in our own day to day lives and that helps us understand when we find it in the Bible.

I am convinced that all of the events prior to and after Jesus' death on the cross have tremendous significance for us as Christians today. Many of the actual events such as the rocks splitting open, the torn veil and even the tombs have meaning to us that are symbolic of our walk and allegiance to God.

That made up the introduction of what I believe is a sobering study, personally evaluating our own loyalty to God. In order to create spiritual awareness regarding our Allegiance we were studying the symbolic message from Revelation 13 and perhaps part of Chapter 14 as well.

Revelation as recorded by *John*, wasn't written to cause fear but was written to create sobriety and consciousness towards one's allegiance to God and how we serve Him.

It's important to note that one cannot determine what most of the *Revelation* means from a literal lens. Rather, we must interpret the symbolism and determine how it connects to real events.

2 weeks ago we studied the *torn veil* and understood from this literal supernatural occurrence, that is, something tangible seen by witnesses with their own eyes, that it also has symbolic meaning.

The *Old* way of worship was immediately done away with and the *New* way was ushered in instantaneously through the death of Jesus. The *Old Covenant* was no longer binding but was replaced with the *New Covenant* through the blood of Christ. The only way to approach God is through Jesus!!!!

What I believe is important is for us to put ourselves in the shoes of those people who were there and had their entire religious world turned upside down. It created a divided loyalty.

What we see is a people who would not accept the *New Covenant* for a variety of reasons just like the reluctance of people today to accept the true *Gospel* for a variety of reasons.

Thoughts such as these enter the mind:

**This is the way we have always done things. I grew up this way. We have to be careful that we don't become so lethargic in our relationship with God, that we shut off our desire to learn His truth even if it means putting away tradition or the way we have always done it.*

**These are my people who are my religious leaders. I trust them. They have always made me feel justified. Such was the sentiment of many of the Jewish people. This can also become our mantra.*

**People who we are so close to; family, friends, or others who we wouldn't want to hurt have become in reality an obstacle.*

Even if the old way is wrong they would sacrifice truth to keep their conscience clear to continue their relationship with someone dear rather than follow actual truth.

John 12:42-43 (Slide 2)

⁴² Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³ for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God.

Even the rulers knew the truth but kept silent so as not to lose standing and the praise of men which they loved more than truth.

Of course holding onto the Old was encouraged by religious factions who could not let go of the Law of Moses.

Acts 15:1 (Slide 3)

But some men came down from Judea and were teaching the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved."

Such can be the case for anyone if we have greater allegiance for a preacher, teacher or elder rather than be fully grounded in the *pillar of truth*. This was the target from Apostle Paul to the young evangelist Timothy.

1 Timothy 3:14-15 (Slide 4)

*¹⁴ I am writing these things to you, hoping to come to you before long;
¹⁵ but in case I am delayed, I write so that you will know how one ought to conduct himself in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth.*

God first! His expectations. Our Allegiance to Him!

Jesus said because of Him there would be division:

Luke 12:52-53 (Slide 5)

⁵² "For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three. ⁵³ They will be divided, father against son and son against (Slide 6) father, mother against daughter

and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

The Bible isn't written to create a divided loyalty, rather for unity!

We get confused when we read *Revelation* and we apply everything literally. *John's* recording of *Revelation* had meaning to those people at the time because they were likely familiar with the *Prophecy of Daniel 7*.

John records what he sees in *Chapter 13* and in much of the *Revelation* with the same symbolic language. Those he is revealing the message to are familiar with the *Hebrew* text of *Daniel 7* much like we would be when we discuss our own Country from an historical persepective.

In *Daniel 7*, the description of the *four beasts* were to be interpreted symbolically as representative of what is real.

The following is a comparative analysis of symbolic language of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13:

Daniel 7 (Slide 7)

Lion with Eagles wings (Babylonian Empire)

Bear that devours Much Flesh (Medo-Persian Empire)

Leopard with Four Heads (Greek Empire)

Terrifying Beast with Iron Teeth and Ten Horns (Roman Empire)

This is terrifying Symbolism translated into Real Hlstorical Empires.

Revelation 13:1-2 (Slide 8)

¹ *And I saw a beast rising out of the sea, with ten horns and seven heads, with ten diadems on its horns and blasphemous names on its heads.* ² *And the beast that I saw was like a leopard; (Slide 9) its feet were like a bear's, and its mouth was like a lion's mouth. And to it the dragon (Satan) gave his power and his throne and great authority.*

If we were in the audience to hear or to read this scripture our minds should automatically go to *Daniel 7* and we would clearly understand that we are once again reading *symbolic language* representing collectively the composite image of all evil empires before and after.

And of course, we couldn't help but to see the *Roman Empire*. The *Empire* they were dealing with and were the most familiar with.

Looking and dissecting the behavior of kingdoms, empires and now nations as one whose leaders have become so powerful and having a desire to exalt that kingdom into some type of self described *deity* is what *John* is writing about.

So why is *John* writing symbolically about the Empire's past and present to Christ's church throughout Asia? Why is he basically saying you've seen this before? Why is he writing concerning the *Roman Empire*?

John is given the *Revelation* of Chapter 13 because some in the church are trying to divide their loyalty. Some have exalted the *Roman Empire* on an equal pedestal as God's Kingdom. *Just as the torn veil was not understood from symbolic religious shifts, for the Jews and soon to be offered to gentiles, allegiance to Rome was causing a divided loyalty.*

Trying to serve and approach God in the Old way in essence, divided loyalty. Since God is a Jealous God, the only way to approach Him is on His terms!!

They believe that Rome is good. Rome has brought peace and prosperity. Yet, in *Daniel* and in John's *symbolic language* it is revealed that Rome isn't good. Rome is the beast so terrifyingly described.

I am personally so afraid that in our modern sophistication and disingenuous interpretation of events and false promises and foreign concepts that threaten our sovereignty established in Godly principle, that our own nation may become equally a terrifying beast.

1 Peter 5:8-9 (Slide 10)

⁸ Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. ⁹ Resist him, firm in your faith

And to it (Rome) the dragon (Satan) gave his power and his throne and great authority.

Brethren be careful, be alert, be soberminded-be patriotic, yes and honor a nation built on God's authority that is; if it walks in His statutes.

John states be careful where you apply your allegiance, your loyalty. Don't give it to Rome because its authority comes from the dragon!

God first, Country second and remember what Apostle Paul tells the church at Philippi:

Philippians 3:17-21 (Slide 11)

¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. ²⁰

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Keep your eye on the prize! Resist wrong with faith! That Veil was Torn for a Reason!

All the events that occurred prior to and after Jesus' death on the cross have significance to Christians today. In particular, the tombs that opened after the death of Jesus have a clear and important relationship to our *Allegiance to God*. In fact, the ability to come out of the tomb after being dead relies on allegiance to God as we will see in coming lessons.

Invitation

If you are outside of Christ, still alienated from Him because of sin, we implore you today to have your sins washed away in baptism.

If you are in Christ, but need prayer for any reason, let your wish be known.

Please let us know how we may serve you.....

Matthew 6:16-24

¹⁶ "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ¹⁷ But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face ¹⁸

so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

¹⁹ "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

²⁴ "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

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